

Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

November 17, 2005

James Connaughton
Chairman
Committee on Ocean Policy
Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Chairman Connaughton:



As co-chairs of the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, we are writing to commend the State of California for its progressive efforts to protect, restore, and maintain its coasts and oceans with the recently adopted *California Ocean and Coastal Information, Research, and Outreach Strategy*. We urge your Committee to pay close attention to this strategy and the commitment of the State of California during the implementation of the President's Ocean Action Plan.

The California Ocean Protection Council's plan calls for science-driven ocean policy. The Council has earmarked \$1 million for ocean and coastal research, and is moving forward with an additional \$21 million commitment for the establishment of an ocean observation system off the coast of California. The recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission, which we respectively chaired, were both centered on science-driven management to improve our nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes policies. The U.S. Commission called for a doubling of the federal financial commitment to ocean and coastal research.

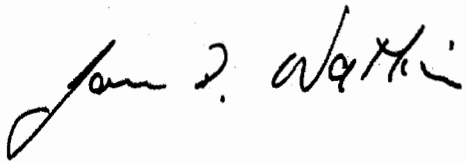
Inherent in the California plan is the recognition that collaboration with the federal government and other states is necessary to support applied research and to promote collection of critical information. Other states and regions around the nation are also expanding such efforts, and we believe these initiatives are the foundation of a new national ocean policy.

The key research priorities set forth in the Council's plan include fisheries analysis and aquaculture; protection and restoration of organisms, habitats, and ecosystems; beach

and shoreline management and coastal hazard identification; strategies to improve air, water, and sediment quality; invasive species prevention; and expanded outreach efforts. These priorities should be incorporated into the national Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy currently being developed under the auspice of the Committee on Ocean Policy. The integration and coordination of federal, regional, state and local research and management initiatives is a fundamental element of our collective effort to develop a comprehensive national ocean policy.

Again, we commend the State of California for its leadership on ocean and coastal issues and remain committed to assisting your Committee in implementing the President's Ocean Action Plan.

Sincerely,



James D. Watkins
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Chairman, U.S. Commission on
Ocean Policy



Leon E. Panetta
Chair, Pew Oceans Commission

cc:

Sharon Hayes, OSTP, Co-Chair, ICOSRMI
Kameran Onley, CEQ, Co-Chair, SIMOR; Acting Co-Chair, ISOCORMI
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Ray Scheppach, Executive Director, National Governor's Association
Governor Mike Huckabee, Chair, National Governor's Association
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